

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (previously presented) An image-protecting film having a protective layer releasably laminated on a support and to be heat transferred onto an image surface of recorded matter on which an image has been formed,

wherein the surface of the support on which the protective layer is laminated has a surface roughness (Ra) according to JIS-B0601 of from 0.2 to 0.5 μm .

Claim 2 (original) The image-protecting film according to claim 1, wherein the protective layer heat transferred onto the image surface provides a surface having a 60-degree specular gloss according to JIS-Z8741 of from 10 to 30%.

Claim 3 (previously presented) The image-protecting film according to claim 1, wherein the support comprises a polyethylene terephthalate film containing inorganic particles, and the protective layer is releasably laminated thereon.

Claim 4 (previously presented) The image-protecting film according to claim 1, wherein the support comprises a polyethylene terephthalate film that has been subjected to surface-roughening treatment by spraying of inorganic particles, and the protective layer is releasably laminated thereon.

Claim 5 (currently amended) The image-protecting film according to claim 1,

wherein the protective layer comprises a surface protective layer and an adhesive layer sequentially laminated from the support side,

wherein the surface protective layer comprises a continuous phase formed of a thermoplastic resin and a dispersed phase formed of a thermoplastic resin dispersed in the continuous phase,

wherein the thermoplastic resin forming the continuous phase has a glass transition temperature from -50 to 60°C, and the thermoplastic resin forming the dispersed phase has a glass transition temperature of 60°C or higher, and wherein the protective layer contains inorganic particles and a wax.

Claim 6 (cancelled)

Claim 7 (previously presented) An image-protecting method comprising:

integrating recorded matter on which an image has been formed, with the image-protecting film according to claim 1 by heat pressing the protective layer onto the image surface of the recorded matter to form a laminated sheet; and then,

peeling off the support from the laminated sheet, thereby forming a protective layer on the image surface.

Claim 8 (original) The image-protecting method according to claim 7, wherein the recorded matter is a recording sheet that comprises polyolefin resin-coated paper having provided thereon an ink receiving layer, and has an image formed on the ink receiving layer by an ink jet

recording system.

Claim 9 (previously presented) Overcoated recorded matter having a protective layer for covering an image, on an image surface of recorded matter on which an image has been formed, wherein the protective layer is formed from the protective layer of the image-protecting film according to claim 1.

Claim 10 (currently amended) The image-protecting film according to claim 1 5, wherein the protective layer comprises a surface protective layer and an adhesive layer sequentially laminated from the support side,

wherein the surface protective layer comprises a continuous phase formed of a thermoplastic resin and a dispersed phase formed of a thermoplastic resin dispersed in the continuous phase,

wherein the thermoplastic resin forming the continuous phase has a glass transition temperature from -50 to 60°C, and the thermoplastic resin forming the dispersed phase has a glass transition temperature of 60°C or higher,

wherein the surface protective layer or adhesive layer or both contain inorganic particles that enhance blocking or scratch resistance of the protective layer or that facilitate release of the protective layer from the support upon heat transfer or both, and

wherein the surface protective layer or adhesive layer or both contain a wax that enhances blocking or scratch resistance of the protective layer or that facilitates release of the protective layer from the support upon heat transfer.

Claim 11 (previously presented). The image-protecting film according to claim 10, wherein the inorganic particles are present in the continuous phase of the surface protective layer in an amount of 10-60% by weight based on a resin content of the surface protective layer.

Claim 12 (previously presented). The image-protecting film according to claim 11, wherein the inorganic particles comprise colloidal silica.

Claim 13 (cancelled)

Claim 14 (currently amended). The image-protecting film according to claim 10 ~~13~~, wherein the wax is present in the continuous phase of the surface protective layer.

Claim 15 (previously presented). The image-protecting film according to claim 14, wherein the wax is present in the surface protective layer in an amount of 1 to 10% by weight based on a resin content of the surface protective layer.

Claim 16 (previously presented). An image protecting method comprising:

(a) integrating recorded matter on which an image has been formed with the image-protecting film according to claim 5 by heat pressing the protective layer onto the image surface of the recorded matter to form a laminated sheet, and then

(b) peeling off the support from the laminated sheet thereby forming a protective layer on the image surface.

Claim 17 (previously presented). An image protecting method comprising:

(a) integrating recorded matter on which an image has been formed with the image-protecting film according to claim 10 by heat pressing the protective layer onto the image surface of the recorded matter to form a laminated sheet, and then

(b) peeling off the support from the laminated sheet thereby forming a protective layer on the image surface.

Claim 18 (currently amended). An image protecting method comprising:

(a) integrating recorded matter on which an image has been formed with the image-protecting film according to claim 15 ~~13~~ by heat pressing the protective layer onto the image surface of the recorded matter to form a laminated sheet, and then

(b) peeling off the support from the laminated sheet thereby forming a protective layer on the image surface.